

We continue the explanation of Imam Ja'far on the existence of God while in dialogue with an Indian scientist. The discussion is reached to the point when the Indian scientist considers five senses as the sole means to gain any knowledge including even the knowledge about the existence of God.

On the contrary, Imam Ja'far discredits five senses and provides proofs to show that such ability in knowing God is out of scope of these five senses. The following is the excerpt from this conversation:

**Indian Scientist:** However, your belief on God is a presumption, a groundless assertion. On the other hand, my denial of God is based on knowledge and truth. I base my argument on the fact that any thing, not recognizable through senses, does not exist at all. It is not possible to recognize or perceive God through any of the five senses.

**Imam Ja'far:** You deny the existence of God because you could not perceive Him through five senses. While, on the contrary, I believe Him, because I could not discern Him through these five senses. The very theory that made you disbelieve, compelled me to believe in Him.

**Indian Scientist:** How is it so?

**Imam Ja'far:** Because, things that we see are some type of compounds, which are made of different parts. Every such compound possesses shape and color that attracts our senses. Therefore, that which is felt or acquired by the senses cannot be God.

Your argument for disbelief does not make a strong case, because God cannot be compared with any of the things perceived by our senses. Also, He cannot be said to assume any resemblance to anything which undergoes the process of change, creation or decay. In other words, everything comes under the same natural phenomenon - the process of transformation and decay.

It is not possible that the Creator of everything comes under the same phenomenon of transformation and decay. God, our creator, cannot possibly be perceivable by the five senses as you claim because He is not a thing like compound nor He was created from nonexistence.

To repeat, If He would be visible to eye and perceivable to other senses, He would have become an observable compound that came into existence at one point in time. As a result, He would have then resembled to things that are visible and perceivable to our senses.

**Indian Scientist:** You have a point but it cannot be the proof for the existence of God. It is because I believe that the only way to know anything is to perceive it by the senses. It is impossible for the mind to know anything without using senses.

**Imam Ja'far:** The very same argument that you use against me also go against you. Your believe, that every thing which is not perceivable by senses does not exist, comes under the same scrutiny.

**Indian Scientist:** I couldn't get? How is it so?

**Imam Ja'far:** You, in the beginning, criticized me that my claim to the knowledge of God was purely traditional and bears no logical basis. That accusation is now applicable to you also because you do not have any proof on the non-existence of God.

Let us assume that your theory, that a thing not known through the medium of senses does not exist, is correct then I have a question for you. Since you say that God does not exist because you haven't sense Him, have you visited every corner of the world and then concluded that God does not exist?

**Indian Scientist:** Of course not. I have not made any such effort.

**Imam Ja'far:** How then your claim is valid? Have you ever ascended or visited to this sky which you behold with your eyes, or have you been in the depths of the earth? Have you traversed the entire world, dived in every sea, and moved through all the atmosphere surrounding earth?

To presumptuously deny the existence of an Omniscient, Omnipotent Creator, you must have been to all these places. Perhaps, the God which you deny, does really exist somewhere in those places since your senses have not perceived each and every existing thing out there?

**Indian Scientist:** I am not sure. Perhaps someone of extraordinary intelligence may reside or may not reside, in any one of those places.

**Imam Ja'far:** Now you have changed your previous position from "I am sure there exists no God" to "Perhaps there is or there is no one". Thus, you have come out from the mere denial of God and have entered into the possibility that He might exist.

You have admitted the probability of a creator You will, I hope, be convinced to admit the certainty of His existence as well.. From flat denial you have come to doubt, from that perhaps you will arrive to the faith.

**Indian Scientist:** How could I believe while my senses do not perceive Him?

**Imam Ja'far:** Well, you could come to this by observing this very Halila you are using to make the medicine.

**Indian Scientist:** If it is so, it would be very convincing to see a proof out of our own experience. As I am expert in using this Halila, so any experimental argument would be very logical to accept.

**Imam Ja'far:** I also want to take the Halila as an example because it is where your expertise lies. Had anything else been within the domain of your expertise, I could have used that to provide the evidence. Everything you could perceive or visualize have a definite organization of its parts and thus must be a product of some creation.

Logically, a creation shows by its very footprints, the existence of its maker or creator. Let me ask you one question. Do you see this Halila?

**Indian Scientist:** Yes, I do.

**Imam Ja'far:** Do you observe what is laid hidden within this Halila?

**Indian Scientist:** Unless I see inside, No

**Imam Ja'far:** Do you accept that that there is a seed and shell inside the Halila that you do not see?

**Indian Scientist:** How can I say that if I have not seen that? Perhaps, there is nothing inside it!

**Imam Ja'far:** Do you acknowledge that there could be a kernel hidden inside the shell that you do not see?

**Indian Scientist:** I cannot say unless I see inside. It could be inside or not at all.

**Imam Ja'far:** Do you believe that this fruit grows in some part of this world?

**Indian Scientist:** Yes, I have seen that land where this particular Halila grows.

**Imam Ja'far:** Don't you consider this Halila that you see as an evidence for the existence of other Halilas which you have not seen as yet?

**Indian Scientist:** I don't know. This Halila could be the only one of its kind. I would believe only if I do see another Halila.

**Imam Ja'far:** What is your take? Does this Halila grows on a tree or does it come to existence without a tree?

**Indian Scientist:** It is, beyond doubt, the product of a tree.

**Imam Ja'far:** Do you know that tree, that is out of sight now, through your senses?

**Indian Scientist:** No

**Imam Ja'far:** It means you have accepted the existence of a tree that you have not perceived through any of your senses. It is contrary to your previous position that you don't believe



anything unless you perceive it by any of your senses.

*Please visit the next article in series: [Principle of System Design](#)*

---

### References

1. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a): Reported by his companion Mufaddal ibn Umar al Jaufi and recorded by 'Allamah Majlisi (d. 1110 AH) in Bihar al Anwar vol 3 pages 153-196